AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1.   (currently amended) An automated, computer-implemented method for carrying out financial transactions within a Central Securities Depository (CSD), comprising an automated, computer-implemented clearing process ~~implemented by a computer~~ and an automated, computer-implemented settlement process ~~implemented by a computer~~, the clearing process preparing a transaction for the settlement process using the following automated, computer-implemented sub-process steps ~~implemented by a computer~~:

- selecting a settlement rule to be followed in the clearing process, the rule defining how the transaction is to be settled,

- defining a settlement obligation group including a number of settlement instructions to be settled at the same time,

- locking in of the assets to which the transaction concerns, the locking-in having the effect of reserving said assets for a specific settlement,

and the settlement process includes the following automated, computer-implemented sub-process steps ~~implemented by a computer~~:

- selecting transfer instructions for all settlement obligations belonging to said settlement obligation group, said transfer instructions being irrevocable instructions to transfer the locked-in assets between participants in the CSD,

- checking that said transfer instructions are carried out successfully, and

- reporting the result of the settlement to the participants involved.

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2.   (previously presented) An automated system for carrying out financial transactions within a Central Securities Depository (CSD), said system comprising:

a computer having an input and a output,

wherein the computer is configured to perform an automated function for a clearing process and an automated function for a settlement process, the computer being configured to implement the clearing process function by preparing a transaction for the settlement process using the following computer implemented sub-functions:

- an automated sub-function for the selection of a settlement rule to be utilised in the clearing process, the rule defining how the transaction is to be settled,

- an automated sub-function for the definition of a settlement obligation group including a number of settlement instructions to be settled at the same time, and

- an automated sub-function for locking in the assets to which the transaction concern, the locking-in having the effect of the system reserving said assets for a specific settlement, and

wherein the computer is configured to perform the settlement process function using the following computer-implemented sub-functions:

- an automated sub-function for selecting transfer instructions for all settlement obligations belonging to said settlement obligation group, said transfer instructions being irrevocable instructions to transfer the locked-in assets between participants in the CSD,

- an automated sub-function for checking that said transfer instructions are carried out successfully, and

- an automated sub-function for reporting the result of the settlement to the participants involved.

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3.   (currently amended) An automated, computer-implemented apparatus for carrying out

financial transactions within a Central Securities Depository (CSD), comprising:

a clearing computer for preparing a transaction for the settlement process and including:

means for selecting a settlement rule to be followed in the clearing process, the

rule defining how the transaction is to be settled,

means for defining a settlement obligation group including a number of settlement

instructions to be settled at the same time,

means for locking in of the assets to which the transaction concerns, the locking-

in having the effect of reserving said assets for a specific settlement, and

a settlement computer arranged for communication with the clearing computer including:

means for selecting transfer instructions for all settlement obligations belonging to

said settlement obligation group, said transfer instructions being irrevocable instructions to

transfer the locked-in assets between participants in the CSD,

means for checking that said transfer instructions are carried out successfully, and

means for reporting the result of the settlement to the participants involved.